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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "MORE GARDEN QUESTIONS." Information from the Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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The flower gardeners are to have the attention today. Every question coming up for answer today concerns the decorative part of the garden.

To begin with, here's a letter from a young housewife who says she is to have a garden for the first time in her life this year and wants to know where she can get bulletins on growing flowers.

The Department of Agriculture has two bulletins that deserve a place in every flower gardener's library. One is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1171, called "Growing Annual Flowering Plants." The other is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1381, called "Herbaceous Perennials." These bulletins are free as long as the supply lasts if you write to the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C. for them. Once more now: the bulletin on annuals is No. 1171 called "Growing Annual Flowering Plants"; and the bulletin on perennials is No. 1381 called "Herbaceous Perennials". Beside these Federal publications your State agricultural college probably has leaflets on gardening.

Another question coming up this week is about ornamental vines for the garden. Writes another gardener: "Will you advise me about the best vines to choose for growing around my house and garden?"

Answer: Your best choice in vines depends on the location of planting. Some vines climb by means of small rootlets; others by twining or tendrils; and still others by weaving or "rambling." If you want a vine to cover a stone or brick surface, the vines that climb by rootlets are probably best. They

fasten their rootlets firmly to stone or brick wall so are dependable climbers. Among these are the Japanese creeper, the winter creeper, and the climbing hydranga.

But now if you want a vine to cover painted wood which will need repainting now and then, or a vine for a wire fence or lattice, a better choice is one that twines or climbs with tendrils, such as the honeysuckle, or the crimson glory-vine, the Chinese wisteria, the Jackman clematis, or the fiveleaf Akebia.

But to cover banks or terraces or to be trained up a trellis or wall, the ramblers are very decorative. These are the vines that climb by weaving -- that left to themselves would form a natural tangle. To reach a height they need to be trained and tied in place. Such vines are the weeping forsythia and the rambler rose.

So much for vines. Now to answer a question about a water garden. "How can I make a little pool for the center of my small garden that does not cost much?"

Answer: You can make a very small pool-garden with half-a-barrel or a water-tight tub, or a section of tile 24 inches in diameter. Along with it use two-thirds of a bushel of very rich soil, a few moisture-loving plants, water and sunshine. Sink the tub or the barrel half into the ground almost to the rim. The tub should be about 2 feet deep to allow for one foot of rich soil and one foot of water. For the soil, mix a bushel of good garden soil or rotted sod with 1/2 pint of ground bone. (You can buy ground bone at almost any seed or farmers' supply store.)

In this small pool, plant deep in the soil just one root of a hardy water lily. Then cover the soil with about an inch of clean sand. Introduce the water slowly and gently so that it will not disturb either sand or soil. Once the pool is full, all you have to do is to replenish the water as it evaporates.

If you spray water in occasionally in the late afternoon it will keep the pool full and also wash the dust or insects from the lily leaves. A few goldfish in the pool will keep mosquitoes away.

To make the edge of your water garden attractive, plant a few clumps of such water-loving plants as iris, forget-me-not, cardinal flower, turtle head, ferns or ornamental grasses. These will frame the pool and the water lilies growing in it.

Question Number 3 comes from a young gardener who says she is unlucky about transplanting flowers. Whenever she buys plants and brings them home from the woods or a neighbor's garden, they are sure to die, she says.

There are several important points in successful transplanting. One is to remove the plant from the ground with the least possible damage to the roots. If the plant has deep roots, dig deep and take as much earth as possible with it. Another point is to keep the roots moist while the plant is moving from one location to another. A third rule is to set the plant out in the type of soil that suits it best. Don't try to move plants from acid soil to sweet soil, for example. Then, too, some periods in the plant's life are better for transplanting than others. Usually it is not a good idea to move a plant while it is in bloom because then the plant needs all its strength for its flowers. A better time is in the early spring or late fall.

The less you disturb the roots of a plant, the more likely it is to live. And always remember that tender roots can't stand exposure to hot sun or drying wind. If your plants are wilted, soak them in water for an hour or two before planting. Set them out late in the afternoon after the sun is set and water them as soon as they are planted; sometimes shading them from the direct rays of the sun for a few days after transplanting will help. Don't crowd the roots or double them up in small space. Give them ample room to spread out and press the earth firmly around them. If you are setting out plants that have been in a pot, the roots may be "pot bound." In that case loosen the soil by pressing it with the fingers. Of equal importance with other essential things, pack the soil firmly about the roots, or about the ball of soil containing them.

That's all the questions on the schedule this week. Just remember that the Department of Agriculture's bulletins on annuals and perennials are yours for the asking. They will give you details and answer most of your questions about garden flowers.

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